

THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Messengers gather for '03 convention

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

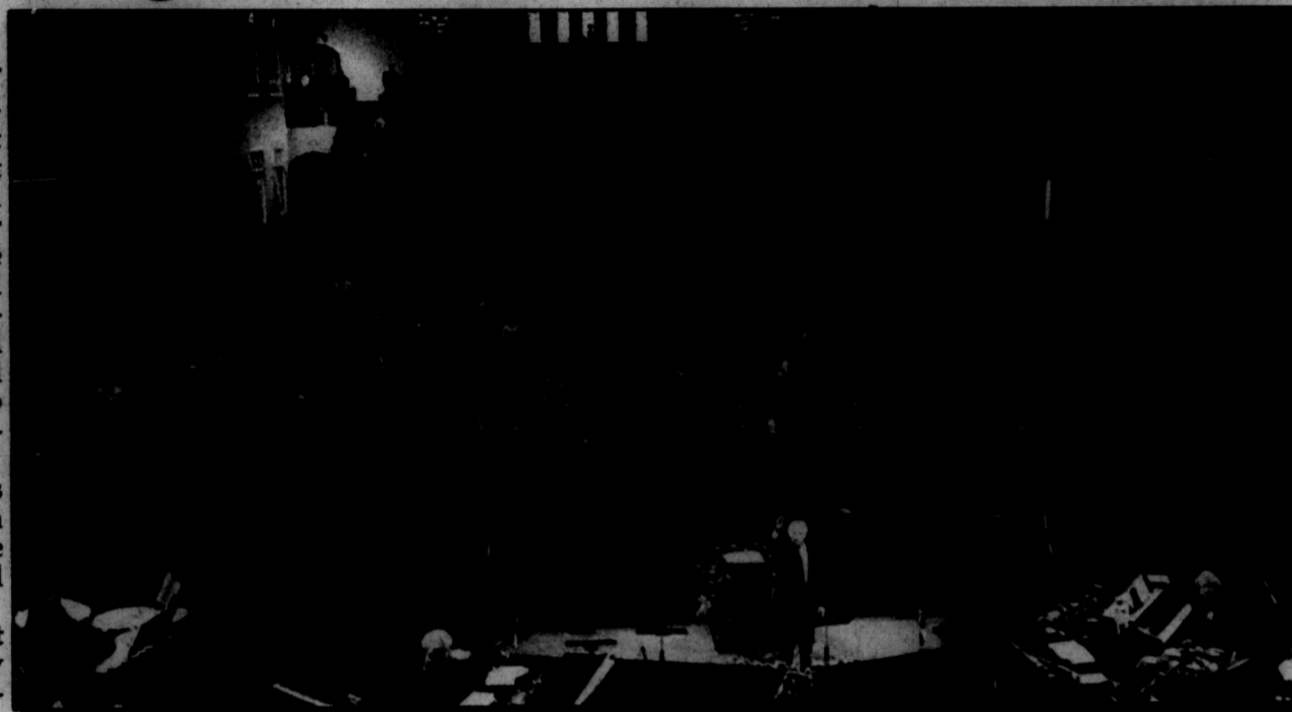
Messengers to the 168th session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention October 28-29 at First Church, Jackson, elected longtime Mississippi pastor Gene Henderson to serve as the convention's new president and turned away a proposed constitutional amendment that would have specifically excluded Cooperative Baptist Fellowship members from serving in leadership positions in the convention.

A total of 1,413 messengers registered for the meeting, a seven percent increase over the 1,319 messengers who attended the 2002 annual meeting.

Henderson, pastor of First Church, Brandon, was elected by acclamation after no other nominations were made.

In other elections, Thad Moore, pastor of Poplar Springs Drive Church in Meridian, was elected by acclamation to serve as the new first vice-president. Archie Herrin, missions director for Tri-County Association in Columbia, was reelected to a second consecutive term as second vice-president. Herrin defeated Joe Young, pastor of Calvary Chapel, Parchman, by a vote of 653 (59%) - 268 (41%).

Gus Merritt, retired pastor of Clarke-Venable Church, Newton, was reelected by acclamation as recording secretary. Michael Weeks, pastor of Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch, was reelected by acclamation as assistant recording secretary.



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS GATHER — A total of 1,413 messengers registered for the October 28-29 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, the organization's 168th gathering, at First Church, Jackson. Messengers elected a slate of new officers, disposed of business matters, adopted resolutions, and offered praise and worship to God during the meeting. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Messengers voted against the constitutional amendment proposed during last year's annual meeting by Ralph Henson, pastor of Arrowood Church, Meridian. The motion stated: "I move that the Mississippi Baptist Convention not allow anyone to be employed, elected, or appointed to positions with the Mississippi Baptist Convention if that person is currently serving in an employed, elected, or appointed position with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship."

In accordance with the convention's constitution, Henson's motion was referred last year to the convention's constitutional and bylaws committee for action at this year's annual meeting.

Attorney Rick Courtney, chairman of the constitution and bylaws committee and a messenger from First Church, Madison, reported at this year's meeting that the committee was unanimous in recommending messengers vote against the proposal. Messengers obliged by a vote of 572 (66%) against and 376 (34%) in favor. The constitution mandates a two-thirds majority for ratifying such amendments.

On October 29, messengers revisited the issue and approved a broader amendment to the convention's bylaws that was recommended by the constitution and bylaws committee. The amendment that passed requires nominees to trusteeships and other positions within the convention to agree to "the highest level of fidelity and loyalty to the mission and purposes of the Convention..." The convention board had previously approved a similar policy to cover board employees.

Messengers also approved a 2004 Mississippi Cooperative Program budget of \$30,854,971, which is \$737,816 (2.34%) less than the record 2003 budget of \$31,592,787. Giving to the Mississippi Cooperative Program has not reached monthly goals in 2003 and will likely fall short of the full budget amount by the end of the year.

The Southern Baptist Convention portion of the 2004 budget will remain steady at 35%, or \$10,799,240, for the ensuing year.

Mississippi Baptists also celebrated 24 new church starts supported by gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.



NEW MBC OFFICERS — Gene Henderson (center), pastor of First Church, Brandon, was elected October 28 as the new president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC). Other convention officers elected to serve with Henderson are (from left) Gus Merritt, retired pastor of Clarke-Venable Church, Newton, recording secretary; Michael Weeks, pastor of Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch, assistant recording secretary; Thad Moore, pastor of Poplar Springs Drive Church, Meridian, first vice-president; and Archie Herrin, missions director for Tri-County Association, Columbia, second vice-president. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

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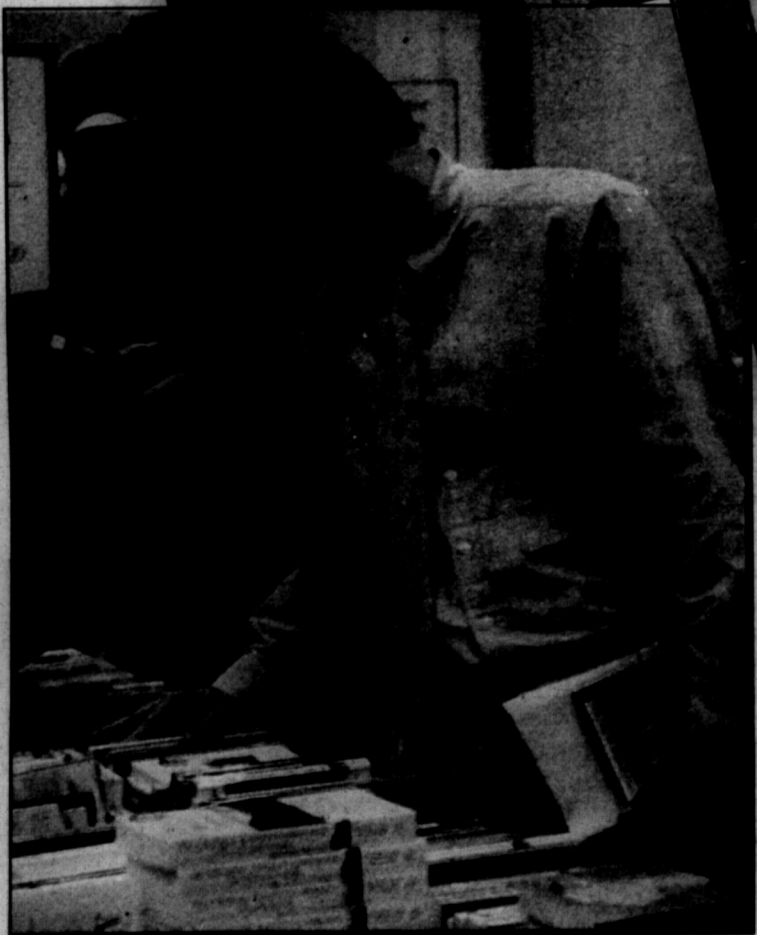
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October 28 - 29, 2003



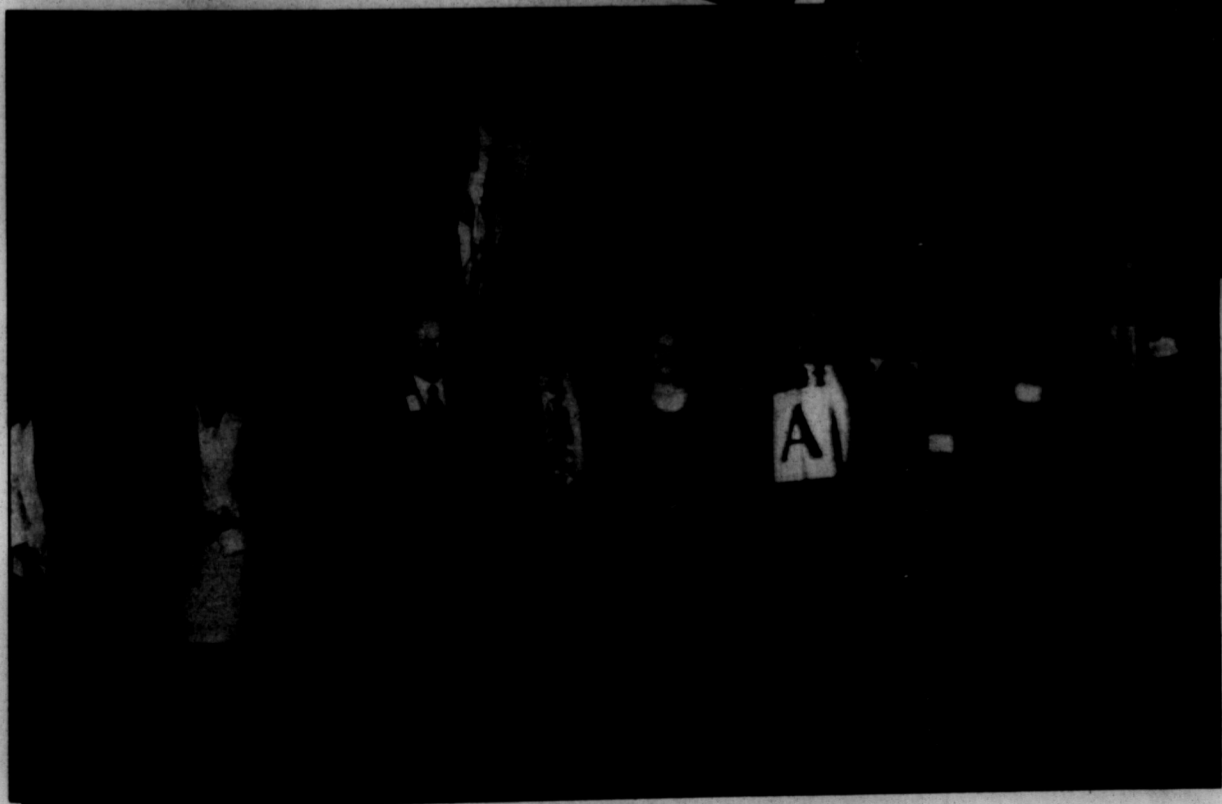
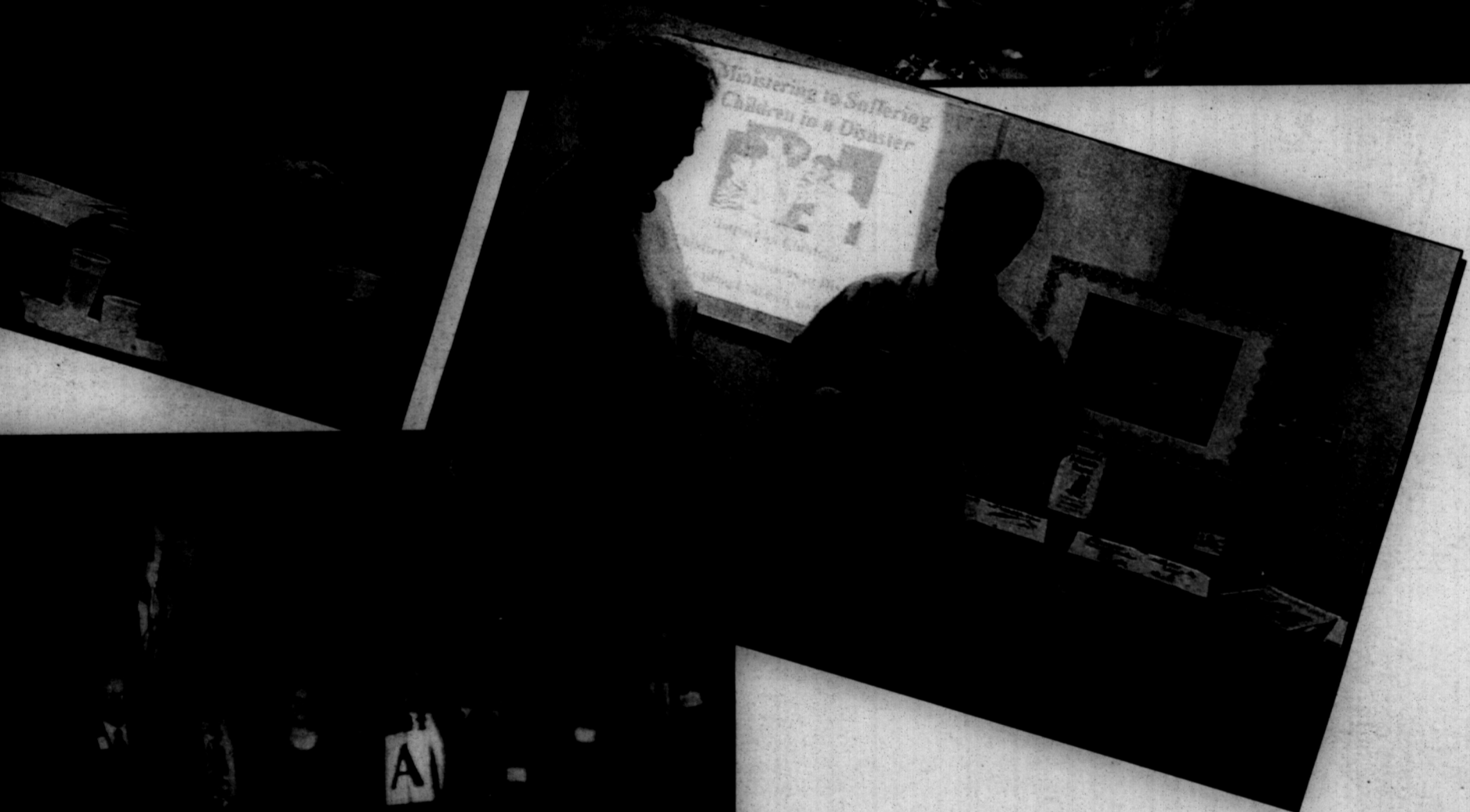
Photos by William H. Perkins

Mississippi Baptist Convention

3 • First Baptist Church • Jackson



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS



Miss. pastors gather for 2003 conference

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Mississippi Baptist pastors and Southern Baptist leaders filled the pulpit October 27 at First Church, Jackson, for the 2003 Mississippi Baptist Pastors' Conference. The conference is traditionally held the day before the start of the annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Bob Dominy, conference president and senior pastor of Park Place Church, Brandon, set the theme based on Matthew 6:33 — "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."

The afternoon session featured Mississippi pastors, with Don Boone of First Church, Louisville, delivering the first message. He was tapped later as president-elect of the conference.

Boone spoke from Matthew 16:19, about Kingdom Membership. He said a woman once asked him if he thought church was on the way out. "No, m'am," he said he replied, "the church is on the way up."

Shannon Marshall, pastor of Steep Hollow Church, Poplarville, spoke from Matthew 9:35, about Kingdom Preaching. He discussed the scene of kingdom preaching, the theme of kingdom preaching, and the scheme against kingdom preaching.

In the scheme against Kingdom Preaching, Marshall said, often there is the rejection of the messenger, rejection of the message, and rejection of the method. The method to which he referred was the foolishness of preaching.

Gene Henderson, pastor of First Church, Brandon, preached from Matthew 25:31-46, about Kingdom Ministry. He pointed out that ministry is included in the Christian's mission mandate, motivation for ministry, and methods of ministry. "Those whom Jesus commended for their service to Him, did not even know that they had done this to Jesus," he pointed out.

Henderson was elected by acclamation on October 28 to his first term as president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, when messengers convened at First Church, Jackson, for the convention's annual meeting.

Stephen Trammel, senior pastor of Florida Boulevard Church in Baton Rouge,



PASTORS' CONFERENCE OFFICERS — Dean Stewart (right), pastor of 38th Avenue Church in Hattiesburg, is the new president of the Mississippi Baptist Pastors' Conference. Don Boone (center), pastor of First Church, Louisville, will serve the coming year as president-elect. Outgoing conference president Bob Dominy (left), pastor of Park Place Church, Brandon, welcomed the new officers. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

opened the evening session with a message from Matthew 18:3, about Kingdom People. "Kingdom people model what Jesus wants multiplied," he said.

Former Southern Baptist Convention President Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Ok., spoke on the declining health of the American family. Elliff is chairman of a Southern Baptist task force on the family, and leads Kingdom Family Conferences around the country.

"Do you want a strong church?" he asked. "Build strong families."

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., closed out the evening with a sermon on Kingdom Secrets from Romans 10:8-13. "You come to Christ and you will be saved. There are no codicils in God's contract. There will be no soul in hell who can say, 'I desired Christ but did not know Him.'"

Worship leader for the conference was Ronnie Nielsen, minister of music at Park Place Church, Brandon. Special music was provided by the Park Place Church Adult Ensemble, harpist Greg Buchanan of Brandon, and music evangelists Eddie Middleton of Acworth, Ga., and Ronnie Cottingham of Lucedale.

The benediction for the afternoon session was pronounced by David Howell, pastor of Bethel Church, Brandon. The evening benediction was pronounced by Scott Walters, pastor of Line Creek Church, Morton.

Dean Stewart, pastor of 38th Avenue Church in Hattiesburg, is the 2003-04 conference president. The 2004 Mississippi Baptist Pastors' Conference is scheduled for October 25 in the Sanctuary of First Church, Jackson.

Rick Henson, pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon, contributed to this article.

Volunteers praised for lay missions involvement

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

The Lay Missions Conference and Banquet, an annual event in conjunction with the Mississippi Baptist Convention, was held October 27 at First Church, Jackson.

Sponsored by the Missions Strategy Team of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), the conference included several special interest sessions at 3 p.m. These included sessions on:

- Agricultural Missions.
- Campers on Mission.
- Chronological Story Telling.
- Construction Missions.
- Disaster Relief ChildCare.
- Educational Missions.
- Lay Church Planting.
- Volunteers in Missions.

Pure Gospel, a music group from First Church, Madison, provided music for the 5 p.m. banquet. As is customary, several lay volunteers were cited for exceptional work during the past year.

Kay Cassibry, executive director-treasurer of Mississippi

Woman's Missionary Union, presented the Volunteer in Missions award to Joan Tyler, member of First Church, Collins.

Ken Rhodes, MBCB director of Missions Mobilization, presented the Volunteer of the Year award for Missions Mobilization to Jerry Owens, member of Cleary Church, Florence.

"Jerry began a ministry called Way to Go Ministries, with the twofold purpose of promoting evangelism and missions," Rhodes stated. "He's involved in preaching and teaching personal evangelism courses, and in supply preaching. He's made eight trips to Ukraine, four trips to East Asia, and one trip to Cordova in the last four years, serving as a lay team leader."

David Michel, MBCB associate executive director for

Mission Strategy, gave the Volunteer of the Year award in Men's Ministry to Pat and Betty Pickering, members of First Church, Collins.

"Pat started off the construction work at 7th Avenue Church in Baltimore, Annie [Armstrong's] church, and is overseeing the construction of the new camp manager's house at Garaywa. They've also done work at Central Hills, and will be construction coordinators at the World Changers project in Hattiesburg," Michel said.

Gene and Willie Ree Williamson, members of Cumberland Church, Maben, were also recipients of the same award.

"These folks are World Changers coordinators, too, and they also do Baptist Student Union renovations across the state," said Michel, "and Willie Ree helps to direct crafts at Central Hills."

Native Mississippian Larry Cox, vice president for mobilization at the International Mission Board (IMB), was the keynote

speaker for the evening. Speaking from Romans 15, Cox said, "Our task and mission is to have a vision as big as God's."

"Bottom line — God's purpose at the end is for all people to worship Him," said Cox. "If everyone did that, we wouldn't even have to have missions. God ordained His Kingdom in such a way that human instrumentality is indispensable."

In reference to IMB having missionaries in dangerous areas of the world, Cox said, "You'd be surprised at the number of calls we get at the IMB from Southern Baptists just like us who tell us, 'You folks are crazy. You've got missionaries being killed, missionaries being kidnapped — why don't you just bring them back home? There's plenty to do in the United States.'"

"My response is, 'You're right, brother (or sister), there's plenty to be done in the United States, but what right do I have to tell someone to come home when they've been called by God to be there?'"

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Sam Atkins and Tim Alexander

Harrisburg Church, Tupelo, recognized Sam Atkins for his perfect attendance Sunday School pin of 51 years on October 17. Pictured is Tim Alexander presenting Atkins with the pin.

Melton Lee Odom was ordained as deacon at West Laurel Chrch, Laurel, on September 28. Pictured (from left) are Cary Worthington, pastor, and Odom.

Calvary Chapel, Parchman, licensed Erik Brewer to the ministry on October 4. Brewer attends Delta State University and serves Calvary as associate pastor for youth and internationals. Pictured (from left) are Joe Young, pastor, Brewer, his wife Elena, and Truman Scarborough, North Central Baptist Association.

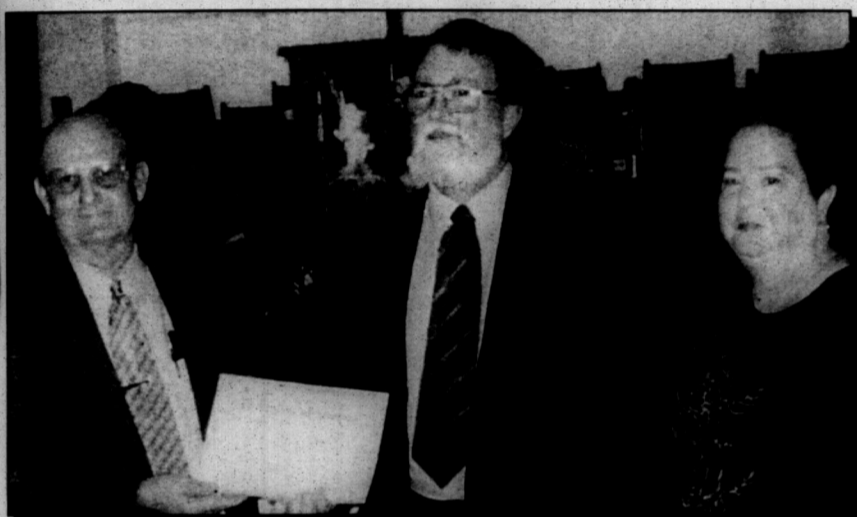
Barnes Crossing Church, Saltillo, ordained Brad Carter as deacon September 14. Pictured (from left) are Carter and Horace Thomas, interim pastor.



Cary Worthington and Melton Lee Odom

Tyler Mahaffey and Clayton Giles, RAs of Branch Church, Morton, recently received the RA knife for memory work and knowledge of Christ. Pictured with them is Larry Druery.

Maybank Church, Hattiesburg, licensed Jim Windham to the ministry June 1. Pictured (from left) are Bob Robinson, pastor, Windham, and his wife Brenda.



Bob Robinson, Jim & Brenda Windham



Joe Young, Erik & Elena Brewer, and Truman Scarborough



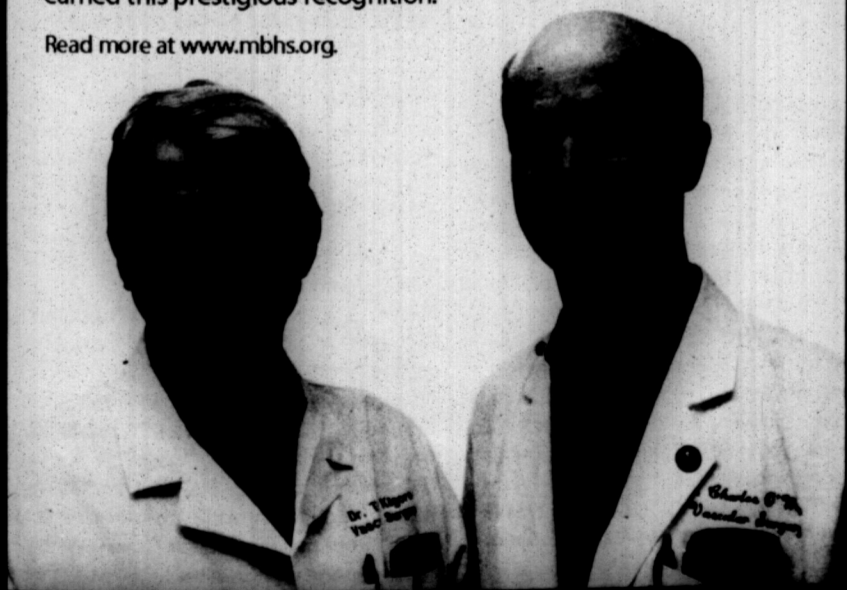
Brad Carter and Horace Thomas

"America's Top Hospitals" "The Best Health Care for Your Family"

Baptist Medical Center and vascular surgeons Charles O'Mara, MD and Thomas Kilgore, MD were the only Mississippi health care providers recognized in *Money* magazine's special report on health care in America. They were cited for top "performance" in carotid endarterectomy surgery.

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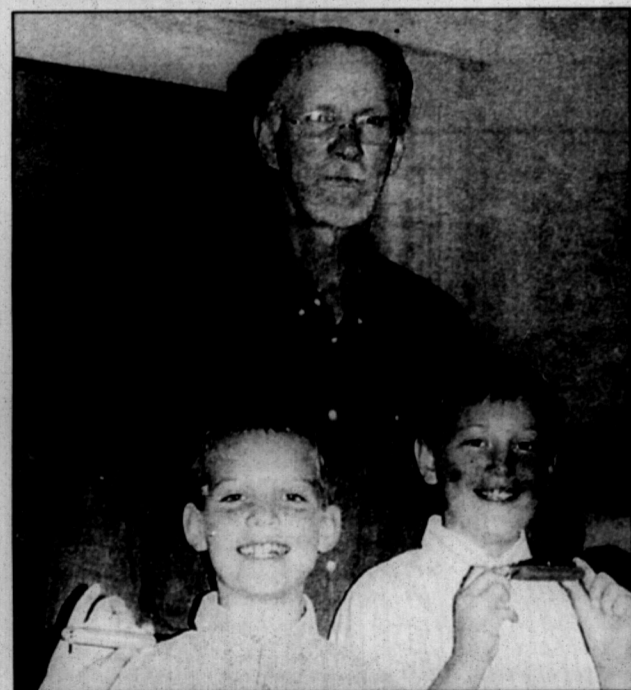
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Tyler Mahaffey, Clayton Giles, and Larry Druery

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ZWTESI VQ TGKI; GKI

DWGXT TPATWD ATQ

TGKI, GKI ATDYHA PA

PKAE VQ HPIW: GKI ZW

KEA LGPATSWHH, ZYA

ZWSPWFPM.

UETK ACWKAQ:
ACWKAQ-HWFWK

Clue: Y = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 22:4

BAPTIST COLLEGE & SEMINARY NEWS



Parsley

William Carey College student Larissa Parsley, Pascagoula, was selected as a science journalist for the Journal of Young Investigators, a national science magazine. Parsley, a biology and English major, will serve as a feature writer for the magazine. Her first article will focus on genetically modified food. Parsley plans to attend Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md., after graduation in May.

The members 2003 Mississippi College Homecoming Court are Corrie Cutrer, member of Ridgecrest

Church, Madison, Homecoming Queen; Casey Johns, Metairie, La., Maid of Honor; Karen Ray, Byram, Senior Maid; Christy Walters, Crystal Springs, Junior Maid; Rainey Robbins, Ridgeland, Sophomore Maid; and Whitney Church, Germantown, Tenn., Freshman Maid. Pictured (from left) are Church, Robbins, Walters, Johns, Cutrer, and Ray.

Three Blue Mountain College Church Related Vocation (CRV) students received special scholarships awarded through the Board of Ministerial Education during the recent CRV Banquet sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board which was held on the BMC campus. Pictured (from left, front) are Amy Ledbetter, who received the E.R. Pinson

Memorial Scholarship; Brandon Powell received the Therman V. Bryant Memorial Scholarship; (back) Johnny Cox received the E.R. Pinson Memorial Scholarship; and Doug Bain, chairman of the Department of Bible.

Blue Mountain

College student leaders were on hand as Duane Bullard, Director of the Tippah County Development Foundation (TCDF), presented Blue Mountain College the 1st TCDF Heritage Award. The Foundation recognized the College for 131 years of "extraordinary contribution to the Christian faith, the citizens of the rural south and the State of Mississippi, and more specifically, to the citizenry of Tippah County." Bettye Coward, President, accepted the award on behalf of the College.

Jeff Schmuki, assistant professor of art history and ceramics at William Carey College on the Coast, received a \$5,000 fellowship from the Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) recently. The fellowship, a portion of the \$1.1 million in grants the Commission will award in 2003-2004, will be used for art research by Schmuki. His wife, Lee Renninger, was also awarded a \$5,000 fellowship which she will use to further her artistic career. Both their works were exhibited at the Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson.



Blue Mountain College TCDF Heritage Award

The William Carey College Speech and Debate Team received a superior ranking and placed first in overall sweepstakes at the Pi Kappa Delta Lower Mississippi Province Tournament held recently in Lake Charles, La. Pi Kappa Delta is the largest forensics honorary in the nation. The Carey Team also received superior rankings in individual events and debate. Additionally, the team was awarded four parliamentary debate speaker excellent awards. The Crusader team's next tournament is at Louisiana State University, Shreveport, in November.

Pictured (from left, front) Meagen Odom, Jessica Pinion, (second row) Jacob Milstead, Maggie Barwick, Sylvia Caver, Chad Rogers, (third row) Bobby Lawson, John Blackmon, Josiah Burns (back row) Lance Baggett, Richard Sanburg, and Matt Stockstill.



2003 Mississippi College Homecoming Court



Ledbetter, Powell, Cox, and Bain



WCC Speech and Debate Team

PART-TIME MINISTER TO STUDENTS - Noxapater Baptist Church is looking for a part-time student minister to work with grades 7-12. Work requirements are Wednesday and weekends. For more info contact: Noxapater Baptist Church, Student minister search committee, P.O. Box 251, Noxapater, MS 39346 or (662) 724-2156.

PIANIST/KEYBOARDIST NEEDED, Southside Baptist Church, paid position. For more information call (601) 372-9161.

FIRST BAPTIST OF FULTON, MISS. is accepting resumes for full-time minister of music and youth. Mail to PO Box 400, Fulton, MS 38843. Fax to (662) 862-5793 or email twinders@nexband.com.

Causey, chairman, PO Box 504, Summit, MS 39666. Phone (601) 276-7527 or email cje@telepak.net.

BRBC OF BILOXI IS SEEKING A part-time minister of youth who has a heart for God and for our youth. Send resumes to Minister of youth search committee, Big Ridge Baptist Church, 3230 Big Ridge Road, D'Iberville, MS 39540.

ORGANIST, CASTLEWOODS Baptist Church. Send a letter of interest or resume to 175 Stonecastle Drive, Brandon, MS 39047 via mail or fax. Fax (601) 992-2623. For information call (601) 992-9977.

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KINGWOOD FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH in Kingwood, Texas is now accepting resumes for Minister of Adult Discipleship to lead in planning, implementing and evaluating the needs of our adult christian education ministry. Please send resumes to KFBC, attn: minister of adults search comm., 2303 Tree Lane, Kingwood, TX 77339 or email resume to eowen@kfbc.org.

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MINISTER OF MUSIC, TRINITY UNITED Methodist, Opelika, Alabama. Salary \$40,000-60,000. The minister of music is responsible for leading and overseeing the entire ministry of music. Trinity is a conserv-

ative, evangelical church called to be an equipping center for the purpose of winning and discipling Christians. Contact: Scott Kaak at (334) 745-2632.

NORTH MONROE BAPTIST CHURCH IS looking for a full-time student minister. Email resumes to youthsearch@northmonroe.com. Or mail them to North Monroe Baptist Church at 210 Finks Hideaway Road, Monroe, LA 71203. You can learn more about the church and its ministries at www.northmonroe.com.

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THE MONTGOMERY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION is currently receiving resumes for Director of Missions through November 30, 2003. Please send resumes to: MBA DOM search committee, attn: Patti Shoemaker, First Baptist Church, 305 South Perry Street, Montgomery, AL 36104.

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THANKS FOR ANALYSIS

Editor:

I write to compliment Justin Peters for his series of articles that have recently been set forth in the Baptist Record. These articles pertain specifically to Peters' writings relating to the contemporary religious phenomena and teachings known as Word of Faith. I salute the young writer for his insightful research, accurate evaluation, and sobering warning pertaining to the errors and dangers interwoven within the fabric of this aberrant theology.

For twenty-five years I have served as pastor of churches in both Mississippi and Arkansas. I have observed the continuing decline of Christian conviction and character. I have continually asked the Lord to call out faithful men of courage and conviction who "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Even though I only know Justin Peters through the words of his articles, I pray God will encourage his spirit, sharpen his mind, and foster his courage for "such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

David Ard, pastor
LifeWAY Church
Little Rock, AR

Editor:

Thank you so much for printing the recent analysis articles by Justin Peters of First Church, Vicksburg. In a day when it is becoming increasingly difficult to discern good from evil, we need more articles like this. I commend Peters for his courage. The articles were extremely helpful to me! May we all be more diligent in discerning truth from falsehood. These articles are worth repeating!

Doug Warren, pastor
Shiloh Church, Vaiden

Editor:

I want to thank you for printing the series of articles by Justin Peters on the Word of Faith movement. He has very clearly and accurately highlighted the errant views of some of the more well known leaders of this movement.

It is sad that these individuals are held in such high esteem by many within evangelical circles, evidently because our eyes may be closed to the depth of the theological errors which are at the heart of their teaching. The ranks of their followers are also filled with individuals who are enticed by the promise of healing and prosperity, motives which are very much in line with the self-indulgent values of our society. It is much more palatable to follow a God who pampers than to follow one who bids us to come and die. We are called to make much of God rather than seek a God who makes much of us.

While these articles may arouse opposition from those

who adhere to the unbiblical philosophy of this movement, I hope that they will enable the church to have a better understanding of the destructive and deceptive teachings which are being presented in the name of God. Thank you again for publishing these articles.

Steve Mayes, pastor
Pelahatchie Church
Pelahatchie

Editor:

Thank you for publishing Justin Peters' analysis of the Word of Faith movement. I pray it will help Bible-based believers realize this movement is leading many down the wrong path away from the Truth found in the Lord. The Word of Faith movement is a self-centered and completely unbiblical cult that rejects the true Gospel in the same manner countless false religions have through the ages. We who know the true Gospel must stand firm in the light of this false religion that is drawing in those who are searching for a touch from God. We must proclaim the true message of Christ as found in the Word of God. We must teach that we are not gods; the physical death of Jesus was sufficient to provide salvation; the Bible is the completed Word of God; and that Christians will suffer.

Kirk Lucky
Hattiesburg

Editor:

Justin Peters deserves to be commended for such forthright articles on false prophets of today. I hope each of his articles is being taken to heart among your readers because spiritual discernment is a necessary thing among Christians, especially with so many televangelists. The Word of Faith movement, which includes false claims and distorted Christology, needs to be recognized and avoided by Christians.

Peters is helping readers understand the spiritual battle before us and the strategy of the enemy. May I recommend three books on the subject?

- The Charismatic Chaos, by John MacArthur (Zondervan Publishing House).

- The Seduction of Christianity, by Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon (Harvest House Publishers).

- The Church Subtly Deceived, by Alexander Seibel (The Olive Press).

Thank you for allowing Peters' articles to be published in The Baptist Record. He deserves our attention in this matter.

Donna Massey
Greenville

Editor:

Thank you for publishing the articles on the Word of Faith movement by Justin

Peters of First Church, Vicksburg. He has certainly passed along to us good information about this movement. He certainly knows from personal experience being healed by a healer is impossible, since he sought healing for himself and it didn't work.

I hope that all our pastors have read these articles. I am sharing this information with my people of Calvary Church, Canton. I have had a telephone conversation with Justin, and I am impressed with his sincerity and devotion to Jesus.

Tom Rayburn
Clinton

Editor's note: The four-part Word of Faith analysis series by Justin Peters is available online at www.mbc.org. Go to "mbcb departments" in the top menu bar, click on "The Baptist Record," then click on "Analysis: False Prophets."

PARTNERS APPRECIATED

Editor:

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) and its Missions Mobilization Department for partnering with International Mission Board (IMB) representatives from Mississippi who are stationed all over the world. For the past two years you have assisted two teams in coming to work with our team. Their presence here has moved the Lord's work forward and has encouraged both our IMB team and our national partners. As these Mississippi teams have returned to their home churches, interest in our work has increased which has resulted in ongoing prayer support. What can we say except, "Thank you, Mississippi Baptists!"

Name withheld for security reasons

IMB representative in
Southeast Asia/Oceania

Editor's note: MBCB Missions Mobilization Department projects are funded by gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering and supported administratively by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

MIRAGES AND MISERY

Editor:

In response to the September 18 guest opinion entitled, Misery and mirages, by Ken West, I say amen! I had the privilege to attend a high school football game in the fair town of Tunica, home to Mississippi's first floating casinos where gambling revenue would be used for education. The school was beautiful from the highway viewpoint. However, as we were led to the back where the football field is located, things began to change.

The field had no sidelines of which to speak. The cheerleaders had to remain outside the fenced playing area. There were many holes. You had to be careful where you stepped, lest you twist an ankle or fall. The bleachers were old wooden benches that felt unsafe.

To our amazement, they had porta-potties set up at intervals outlying the grounds. I asked an official at the gate if there were any indoor facilities we could use. He kindly pointed me in the direction of an open door to the school. Upon inspection, I realized why they had porta-potties. The bathrooms were outdated and dirty, and some toilets and door locks didn't work.

Talk about mirages and misery! I fully agree with West — gambling has not benefited society, but it is wreaking havoc. Thank you to Southern Baptists and others who take a stand against this boil.

Judy Ledford
Cleveland

PRAY FOR TROOPS

Editor:

I would like to take this time to thank my brothers and sisters for their prayers. I ask that they continue to pray for the troops overseas. My name is Leavy Shoffner Jr. I am 21 years old. I am a licensed and ordained minister in the Southern Baptist Convention. I have membership at Beacon Street Church in Philadelphia. I answered the call to the ministry for evangelism about five years ago.

I am presently at Fort Lewis, Wa. I am a chaplain assistant with the 298th Corps Support Battalion in Philadelphia. I was led by the Spirit of God to go along with the 367th Maintenance Company for the religious support of the troops. I am serving as an acting chaplain. We have six months total in the unit.

Please remember all of us in your prayers as we continue on to Iraq. Pray God will use these men of God he has sent to touch lives.

Leavy Shoffner Jr.
Ft. Lewis, Wa.

Editor's note: Shoffner's current mailing address is SPC Leavy Shoffner Jr., 367th Maintenance Company, Box 339546, Ft. Lewis, WA 98433-9546.



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Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

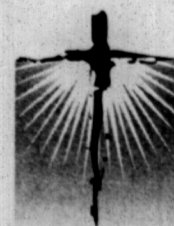
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Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Acting Boldly for God

Acts 4:1-3, 7, 12-13, 18-21, 23, 29-31

By Jon Daniels

When is the last time you acted boldly for God, when you attempted to do something for God that required an extreme step of faith, requiring you to step outside of your comfort zone? So many Christians are content with living their lives in relative comfort and contentedness, not wanting to do anything or attempt anything that might cause an eyebrow to be raised or a question to be asked. The status quo is fine with us. We do not want anyone or anything to interfere with the way things have always been. Sometimes, acting boldly for God upsets the status quo.

D.C. Talk's song several years ago asked the question, "What will people think if they hear that I'm a Jesus freak?" I

think it would be safe to say that Peter and John were a couple of "Jesus freaks", meaning that their love for and devotion to Christ as their Savior and Lord drove them to act boldly for God in the face of harsh criticism, persecution, and personal sacrifice.

As we examine their actions here, we can see what it takes to act boldly for God.

IT TAKES COURAGE - v. 1, 3

Even while Peter and John were still sharing the Gospel with the people who had gathered in the wake of the healing of the crippled beggar, the authorities showed up on the scene. These men had the authority to arrest Peter and John. They could and did exact strong punishment (see Acts 5:17-18, 40), but that did not stop Peter and John. They kept



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right on courageously preaching the Gospel. I wonder what you and I would have done in that situation.

IT TAKES KNOWING THE TRUTH - v. 2, 12-13

Peter and John acted boldly for God because they knew the Truth, and had been set free by the Truth (John 8:32). They acted boldly for God because they knew that what they were sharing with these people was the life-changing truth of the Gospel.

When we know the truth, when our lives have been transformed by the truth of the Gospel, we will be much more likely to act boldly for God. Our knowledge of the truth must be constantly growing and deepening. Our minds must be renewed daily as we study, apply, and live in obedience to the truth of the Word of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

IT TAKES THE SPIRIT'S POWER - v. 7

Boldness for God is not something we can conjure up

in our own power. It comes when we are living in the Spirit, walking in Him, and following His guidance in our lives. Paul told Timothy, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, or love and of self-discipline" (2 Tim. 1:7 NIV). Why, then, do we choose to live timid and tepid lives void of the Spirit's power? The world desperately needs to see the power of the Spirit at work in our lives!

IT TAKES PASSION - v. 18-21

Can't you just hear the passion in Peter's and John's voices as they responded to the ridiculous command from the authorities to stop speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus? Their passion for absolute obedience to God is so inspiring and, at the same time, convicting. They were intent on obeying God no matter what the consequences were. Oh, that we would have an ever-deepening passion for God that translates into bold witnessing for Him of "what we have seen and heard" (v. 20).

IT TAKES A RECOGNITION THAT IT'S ALL ABOUT GOD & NOT ABOUT US - v. 29-31

After Peter and John were reunited with their fellow believers and gave their report, they immediately joined together in prayer (v. 24ff). The substance of this prayer shows us that they knew that what they were involved in was a "God thing." They acknowledged His sovereignty (v. 24, 28). They asked for His enablement and boldness (v. 29). They asked for His work to be done in miraculous ways (v. 30), and God answered their prayers in a mighty way (v. 31).

Boldness for God is a boldness that comes from God. The popular praise song, Heart of Worship, says, "It's all about you, Jesus." God will give us the boldness we need to witness for Him and impact the world around us when we recognize and acknowledge that it's all about Him!

Daniels is pastor of Monticello Church, Monticello.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Revelation

Colosians 1:24-2:5

By Laura Russell

Because Jesus bridged the chasm between God and us, we don't have to approach God indirectly. We have no need to prove our worth through superior behavior. We can come to God directly and boldly because of Christ.

In today's lesson Paul admits that before Christ, a mystery was kept hidden for many centuries.

With Christ, everything broke out into the open. "Christ is enough" Paul declares. He is God, the fullness of God, the One who made the world, the reason that everything exists.

All the mystery and treasure and wisdom you could ask for are found in the person of Jesus Christ; there is no need to look elsewhere.

Joyful commitment (1:24-27).

When Paul says he is "completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions," he does not mean that Christ's suffering and death were inadequate to save us. He is saying that suffering is unavoidable in bringing the good news of Christ to the world. It is called Christ's suffering because all Christians are related to Christ. When we suffer, Christ feels it with us, but this suffering can be endured joyfully because it changes lives and brings people into God's kingdom. The false teachers in the Colossian church believed spiritual perfection was a secret and hidden plan that only a few privileged people would discover. Their secret plan was meant to be



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exclusive. Paul says that he proclaims God's Word fully — not just part of it. Paul also calls God's plan a "mystery that has been hidden" not because only a few could understand it but that it was hidden until Christ came. God's secret plan is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." God planned to have His Son live in all who believe in Him, not just a select few.

Worthy goal (1:28-29). Paul wanted believers to mature spiritually. He declared that his goal in faithfully proclaiming the revelation of God's mystery was to help everyone become mature in Jesus Christ. Paul said we must strive wholeheartedly but not in our strength alone. We have the power of God's Spirit working in us. God gives the power to become mature. Everywhere Paul went, he brought the Good News to all who would listen because he believed God's message was for everyone. Paul warned

that without Christ people are doomed to eternal separation from God. He also taught that salvation is available through faith in Christ. What is the Christian message all about? It is about Christ. He is the beginning, center, and end of it. It is only as life lived in Him, subject to His will and direction, that Christians will become mature. The goal of the Christian life is maturity. We start out as babes, but if we continue to live in relationship to Christ, he will bring us to full Christian growth and maturity.

Legitimate concern (2:1-5). Paul expressed his concern for the spiritual well-being of the Colossians. He wanted them to have a better understanding of God in Christ so false teachers could not deceive them. My husband, the banker, says that in the banking world, you work so much with "real" money that you know when the "fake" comes along. Rarely do tellers spend time looking at or working with counterfeit — they spend their time with

the "real stuff," therefore they know it. That is the same thing Paul is talking about here. Paul warned his readers about being deluded by the attractive new teachings which had surfaced in the midst of the Colossians and had even spread to the church at Laodicea. The problem that Paul was battling in these churches was a heresy, or teaching contrary to the Bible, and it attacked Christianity in several ways. The false ideas sounded attractive, and they could easily fool a church that didn't know Christian doctrine well. Parts of these false beliefs still pose problems for many in the church today. We combat these false teachings by becoming thoroughly acquainted with God's Word through personal study and sound Bible teaching. That is how you get to know the "real stuff" so that when the counterfeit comes along, you won't be fooled by it.

Russell is member of First Church, McComb.

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The Record is pleased to publish articles, photographs of special events, and news items in cooperation with churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Articles submitted for publication in The Record must be either (a) typewritten or (b) printed on 3 1/2 by 11-inch paper, double-spaced on standard margins. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

Articles may be submitted electronically to the address below and must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please include articles on the following topics: church news, community events, and other items of interest to the readers of The Record.

Photographs may be color or black and white, but must be of high quality.

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THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Bill Causey, Interm Executive Director

P.O. Box 27

Clinton, MS 39060-0027

(601) 922-2242

e-mail: bcvl@misnet.com

www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium.

This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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On behalf of all the children and staff of The Baptist Children's Village, we gratefully appreciate the gifts of honor and memory given to the children of The Village View.

So. Baptists on scene of western wildfires

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (BP) — Fire victims at the largest evacuation site in Southern California are being fed, provided showers and even entertained, by local Southern Baptists.

A group of 50 students from California Baptist University in Riverside, for example, helped serve dinner Oct. 29 to the 1,800-plus

people at the San Bernardino Airport evacuation site; the students also picked up trash and debris around the facility.

Of the 32 shelters open in Southern California to house fire evacuees, the San Bernardino Airport location is the largest, said Frank Forsey, one of the managers of the shelter run by the American Red Cross.

Church members from various Baptist congregations have been staffing a mobile kitchen and a six-stall shower unit provided by the California Southern Baptist Convention.

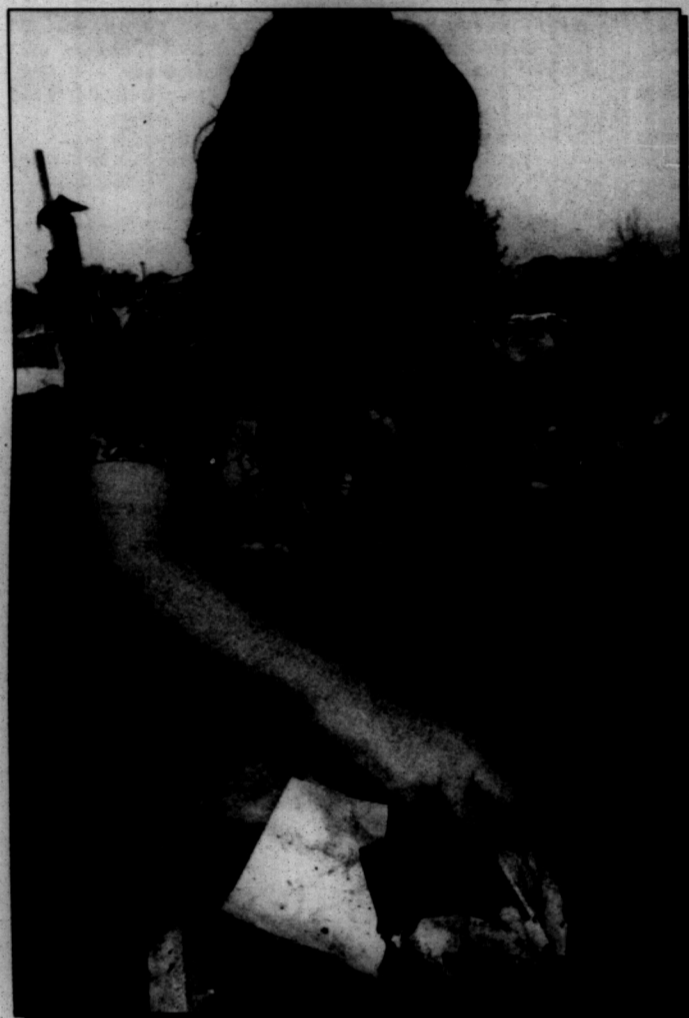
A wrestling match held outside the shelter by the Empire Wrestling Federation was opened with prayer from Set Free Church of Yucaipa youth pastor Kirk Overstreet and closed with a rap song and altar call.

A mobile children's Sunday School unit from Set Free Yucaipa, called Kids For Christ, meanwhile, has been

parked at the shelter offering free puppet shows, face painting, balloon animals, stories, and free clothes and food items from the church's thrift store.

"They are doing a great job," said Forsey of the Southern Baptist volunteers. "They do any job we ask them to do. It's a tremendous help to us."

Most of all, Forsey said he appreciates the fact that the churches came to him, instead of him having to recruit volunteers. "I always know when people really want to help because they will seek me out," he said.



SEARCHING FOR MEMORIES — Laura Carrasco, a member of Immanuel Church in Highland, Calif., searches through the rubble of her home to recover a few photos. Carrasco's mother worked more than one job to pay for the house that the family moved into in 1954, and when her mother died two years ago, she told Carrasco the house was her gift to the family. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)



WALL OF FIRE — Flames tower over 50-foot trees as wildfires sweep through communities in Southern California last week. Even from 1,000 feet away, observers felt the roiling heat as the trees combusted with loud 'pops.' (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

Various Southern Baptist churches are sending volunteers throughout the week to serve meals and staff the shower stalls, said Paul Wilkerson, director of missions for the Inland Empire Baptist Association.

"It has been a concerted effort by many churches," Wilkerson said. "We started out this disaster without a dime and churches are taking collections and volunteering. God has really provided during this crisis."

The outreach by the 182-church association comes at a time when many members have suffered the loss of their own homes.

The evacuees are thankful. "This is what we needed," Maria Pena, age 17, said of the hot showers. "We're glad you brought in these showers because I won't go in the other ones [at the evacuation site], both of which have only cold water."

"This is great," said Vanessa Campos, age 17, from Arrowhead who has been sleeping in the shelters' parking lot for four nights to protect valuables in her vehicle. "We get so dirty from the ashes falling it's nice to have a hot shower. It makes us feel better."

Wal-Mart, Target, Sears, and Sam's Club have donated toiletries, washcloths and towels for the shower unit which has dispensers for soap and shampoo in each stall. It also has three sinks for evacuees to brush their teeth and shave.

Several members of Inland Community Church of Chino acted as greeters and counselors at the airport shelter, walking around praying with people on green cots and passing out boxed meals.

Inland Community was planning to send several vans and trucks loaded with food, clothing and items Oct. 30 for children at the shelter collected by the congregation.

Meanwhile, 13-year-old Alexandria Graham was glad to have some entertainment at the site. "We're having fun," she said of the wrestling event. "I've been here almost a week because my house is burned. This is cool. I like it."

Don Bechtol, a Running Springs resident at the site, watched his four children scream and cheer on the wrestlers. "They are having a great time," he said. "We needed this. It's great to see my kids having fun through this."

King led the crowd surrounding the wrestling ring in a prayer for the firefighters, the safety of the evacuees' homes and for the needs of those at the shelter.

"We just wanted them to forget their troubles for a couple of hours and this is the opportune time to minister," King said. "This is the best time to let the love of God show."

The Set Free church also bussed families from the shelter to their Yucaipa site for Halloween night activities on Oct. 31.

NOBTS retired prof Robbins dies in Vicksburg

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — Ray Frank Robbins, former professor of New Testament and Greek at New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS), died Oct. 26 at River Regional Hospital in Vicksburg, Miss. He was 87 years of age.

Robbins taught at Howard College in Birmingham, Ala. (now Samford University) from 1946-52. He joined the NOBTS faculty in 1952. For 29 years, Robbins taught New Testament and Greek at the seminary. Shortly after his retirement in 1981, NOBTS trustees named Robbins professor emeritus of New Testament and Greek.

He continued to teach after his retirement from the seminary. For 14 years, he served as senior professor and visiting scholar in the department of religion at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton.

Charles Ray, associate dean of the research doctoral program and professor of New Testament and Greek at NOBTS, studied under Robbins and later spent a year as visiting scholar at Mississippi College working alongside his mentor.

"My first class as a seminary student in 1974 was Introduction to New Testament with Dr. Robbins, and he served as the chairperson for my doctoral committee until his retirement," Ray recounted. "I remember his easy smile, his friendly manner and his love for God's Word. In his class on the [Book of] Revelation, he handled all the competing interpretations with grace and candor, a remarkable task considering the diversity of thought on that letter."

"Dr. Robbins ended most heated class discussions with 'When I get to heaven, I'm going to ask John what he meant. If he tells me I'm right I'm not going to be surprised, but if he tells me I'm wrong I'm not going to argue with him,'" Ray said. "I have a feeling Dr. Robbins wasn't surprised by much when he and John sat down to talk."

Robbins authored several books during his career, including *The Life and Ministry of Our Lord*, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, *The Equipping of Disciples*, and *Philemon in The Broadman Bible*

Commentary series. He also joined with Baptist statesmen Hershel H. Hobbs and G.R. Beasley-Murray to write *Revelation: Three Viewpoints*.

A native of Flomaton, Ala., Robbins earned master of theology and doctor of theology degrees from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; a doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Edinburgh; and a bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College.

A memorial service is scheduled for Nov. 13 at 2 p.m. at First Church in Talladega, Ala. Another memorial service will be Nov. 14 at 2 p.m. in Mississippi College's Provine Chapel on the school's campus in Clinton.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the scholarship fund established in his memory at Samford University, 800 Lakeshore Drive, Birmingham, AL 35229.

Robbins is survived by four children: Dixie R. Schrier and Ray F. Robbins II, both of Talladega, Ala., and Cecil H. Robbins and John W. Robbins of Maryland; and 10 grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his first wife Louise, and his second wife Iris.



Robbins